

History of the Army in Maryborough, Victoria

The Volunteer Period 1854 - 1884

The first mention of the Army's long association with the City of Maryborough is contained in an account of the celebrations for Queen Victoria's birthday on 24th May 1861 at Castlemaine. The Bendigo Volunteer Rifle Corps appeared in public for the first time on that occasion and, according to the Advertiser, "a large crowd had collected and, as coach load after coach load arrived, they were vociferously cheered. The Bendigo, Castlemaine and Maryborough Rifles, numbering 350 and the Kyneton Mounted Rifles of 40, took part in the review which proved a great success".

2. The uniform of the Bendigo Volunteer Rifle Corps, of which the Maryborough Rifles formed a part, consisted of a uniform of invisible green, with a red shako (head dress). The head dress was subsequently considerably improved by the adoption of black horsehair plumes.

3. The first anniversary of the Corps which had been formed on 16th October 1860 was celebrated by a review of the Northern infantry and mounted corps at the Epsom racecourse. A total of 390 troops were present including the Maryborough infantry. According to the Advertiser the affair was a great success and there was a large attendance of the public.

4. In 1863, seventy six members of the Bendigo Volunteer Rifle Corps enrolled for active service in the Victorian Contingent of the New Zealand Volunteers i.e. for the Maori Wars. It is reasonable to assume that some members of the Maryborough Rifles were included.

5. In 1872, the infantry battalions in Victoria were reorganised and the title of the Bendigo Rifles was changed to "Mount Alexander Battalion Rifles".

6. In 1883, it was decided that the volunteers in Victoria should be formed into a militia force which meant that henceforth they would be paid for their services. The volunteers of the Bendigo Rifles held their final parade on 1st December 1883 and were then redesignated the "4th Battalion Infantry". In 1887, the title became the "'4th or Mount Alexander Battalion Rifles".

The Militia Period 1884- 1900

7. In 1890, the 4th Battalion became the 4th Victorian Regiment.

8. There were several other changes in title and organisation until the formation of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901 when the era of the various colonial military forces ended and the Australian Commonwealth Military Forces came into being.

/...The Commonwealth

The Commonwealth Period 1901 - 1918

9. Due to the enormity of the task of converting the colonial militia forces into a Commonwealth force, and the fact that a portion of the forces were engaged in a war in South Africa (and for a short time in China), it was not until 1903 that the changeover to Commonwealth control was completed. The change from State (Colony) to Commonwealth control, and the subsequent reorganisation, was notified in Commonwealth Gazette 35 of 25th July 1903. The new designations of the Victorian infantry units were :

<u>Old unit</u>	<u>New unit</u>
1st Battalion	5th Australian Infantry Regiment
2nd Battalion	6th Australian Infantry Regiment
3rd Battalion	7th Australian Infantry Regiment
4th Battalion	8th Australian Infantry Regiment
Victorian Scottish Regiment	No change in title
Various country detachments of the Victorian Rangers	The Victorian Rangers

10. As with the other Colonies, Victoria had supplied contingents for the Boer War. With the birth of the Commonwealth, the forces sent were part of a national contribution. The battle honours gained in the Boer War are the first to be inscribed on the Colours of today's infantry regiments.

11. In 1908, the 8th Infantry Regiment was split to become the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 8th Regiment. The uniform at that time was khaki with green facings and the regimental motto was "Cede Nullis".

12. In May 1912, the whole of Australia was divided into 23 brigade areas and 93 battalion areas. The infantry units were redesignated and allotted to brigades but at that time only a portion of the 93 battalions were raised. Between 1912-1918, despite the involvement in World War I, the remaining battalions were raised progressively and territorial titles were allotted to most battalions.

World War I 1914 - 1918

13. Recruiting for World War I was not conducted on a territorial basis - instead a special expeditionary force, the Australian Imperial Force, was raised. This consisted of entirely new units and most Maryborough volunteers would have served in the 7th, 8th and 38th Battalions of the AIF. The battle honours gained by those units are today borne on the Colours of the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Victoria Regiment.

Between the Wars 1918 - 1939

14. In 1918 an attempt was made to identify CMF units with those of the AIF. This proved to be an unsuitable scheme and in 1921, a new system was introduced whereby the number of militia battalions was reduced, each battalion having the numerical designation of its AIF counterpart in addition to a territorial title. Maryborough, of course, was not a large enough centre to be allocated a battalion of its own and it is not clear as to which was the parent unit of the Maryborough detachment during this period. Certainly it would have been either :-

7 Inf Bn (Mount Alexander Regiment) drawn from
from the 7th and 21st Bns AIF, or

38 Inf Bn (The Bendigo Regiment) drawn from the
7th and 38th Bns AIF

15. In 1929, further changes were made when some battalions were "linked" together without a territorial title so that the 38/7 Inf Bn came into being. This system continued until the end of World War II.

World War II 1939 - 1945

16. For World War II, once again a special expeditionary force (the 2nd Australian Imperial Force) was raised. However, unlike World War I, some CMF battalions also saw active service in addition to their AIF counterparts.

Post World War II

17. At the end of World War II, all previous units were disbanded and the CMF remained in a dormant state until 1st April 1948, when a number of units were raised. Included was the 8/7 Bn (The North West Victorian Regiment) with its Headquarters at Ballarat and sub units at Ballarat, Mildura, Daylesford and Maryborough.

18. In 1960, the most drastic change in the history of the Citizen Forces occurred when the Australian Military Forces (both Regular and Citizen) adopted the pentropic organisation. This resulted in much larger battalions of which only two were allocated to Victoria. It was impossible to retain old regimental titles and traditions under this system and a new regiment, the Royal Victoria Regiment, came into being. The 2nd Bn of the new regiment was allocated to country areas and the Maryborough detachment was grouped with Ballarat to form a company of the new battalion.

19. There have been several organisational changes since 1960 but the 2nd Battalion, the Royal Victoria Regiment has continued as the country battalion with its Headquarters in Ballarat. The platoon at Maryborough is, of course, part of 2 RVR.

20. On Saturday, 30th August 1980, the City of Maryborough granted "Freedom of Entry" to 2nd Battalion, The Royal Victoria Regiment in recognition of the long and distinguished association between the City and the Australian Army.